

## **Jannat al-Baqi**



**Compiled by: Syed Ghulam  
Murtuza Rizvi  
Advocate,  
(Retired Additional Chief Legal Adviser,  
ONGC).**

Jannat al-Baqi also called Baqī' al-Gharqad is the principal cemetery of Medina, the oldest and historically most important Islamic graveyard. The word baqī' originally denoted an area covered with trees and scrub, and gharqad is the box-thorn (genus Lycium). This cemetery of Medina is the first exclusively Muslim burial-ground. According to Islamic tradition, the prophet Muḥammad himself selected its location. It is located to the southeast of the Masjid al-Nabawi (The Prophet's Mosque).

During the construction of the Al-Masjid Al-Nabawi, on the site he purchased from two orphan children when he arrived after his migration from Mecca to Medina, Asa'ad Bin Zararah or Usman Bin Mazun, one of Muhammad's companions died. The Prophet Muhammad [SA] chose the spot to be a cemetery and Asa'ad Bin Zararah was the first individual to be buried in al-Baqi among the Ansar.

The site of the burial ground at al-Baqi was gradually extended. Nearly seven thousand companions of the Holy Prophet (s) were buried there, not to mention those of the Ahlul Bayt (a). Imam Hasan Ibn Ali (a), Imam Ali Ibn Al-Husayn (a), Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir (a), and Imam Ja'far Al-Sadiq (a) were all buried there.

Earlier Caliph Uthman ibn Affan was buried in the huge neighboring Jewish grave yard. The first enlargement of al-Baqi in history was made by Muawiyah ibne Abusufiyan the first Umayyad Caliph in order to honour Uthman ibn Affan. Muawiyah included the huge Jewish graveyard into al-Baqi cemetery.

The Umayyad Caliphate built the first dome in al-Baqi over his grave. During different times of history, many domes and structures were built or rebuilt over many famous graves in al-Baqi.

### **Demolition**

The cemetery has been demolished twice by forces loyal to the Wahhabi-Saudi alliance firstly in 1802 and later on 1925.

In 1802, an army lead by the sons of Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab (the founder of Wahhabism) and Muhammad ibn Saud occupied Taif and began a bloody massacre. A year later, the forces occupied the holy city of Mecca. They executed a campaign of destruction in many sacred places and leveled all the existing domes, even those built over the well of Zamzam. However, after the army left, Sharif Ghalib breached the truce, inciting the Wahhabis to reoccupy Mecca in 1805.

In 1806, the Wahhabi army occupied Medina. They did not leave any religious building, including mosques, without demolishing it, whether inside or outside the Baqī' (graveyard). They intended to demolish the grave of the Prophet Muhammad, may the peace and blessings of God be upon him, many times, but would repeatedly change their minds. At this time, non-Wahhabi Muslims were prevented from performing the Hajj (pilgrimage). In 1805, Iraqi and Iranian Muslims were refused permission to perform Hajj, as were the Syrians in 1806 and Egyptians the following year. The Saudi leader at the time wanted the pilgrims to embrace his Wahhabi beliefs and accept his Wahhabi mission. If they refused, he denied them permission to perform the Hajj and considered them heretics and infidels .

The Wahhabi army destruction campaign targeted the graves of the martyrs of Uhud, the mosque at the grave of Sayyid al-Shuhada' Hamza bin Abdul Muttalib and the mosques outside the Baqī': the Mosque of Fatima al-Zahra, the Mosque of al-Manaratain, and Qubbat' al-Thanaya (the burial site of the Prophet's incisor that was broken in the battle of Uhud). The structures

in the Baqi' were also leveled to the ground and not a single dome was left standing. This great place that was visited by millions of Muslims over many centuries became a garbage dump, such that it was not possible to recognize any grave or know whom it embraced.

The occupation of the holy places by the army and preventing the Muslims from performing Hajj led thousands of people to flee Mecca and Medina to escape religious persecution. The Muslims started to complain and express their concerns, and public opinion put pressure on the Ottoman Caliph to liberate and rebuild the two holy places and once again permit the Muslims to perform the pilgrimage. Accordingly, an army led by Muhammad Ali Pasha, the Caliph's viceroy in Egypt, was sent. When the forces arrived in the Hijaz, a number of tribes marched in support of the army, which regained control over Medina and then Mecca. In 1818, the Wahhabis were defeated and they withdrew from the holy places. The Prophet's Mosque, the Baqi' and the monuments at Uhud were rebuilt during the reigns of the Ottoman sultans 'Abd al-Majid I, 'Abd al-Hamid II and Mahmud II. From 1848 to 1860, the buildings were renovated and the Ottomans built the domes and mosques in splendid aesthetic style. They also rebuilt the Baqi' with a large dome over the graves of the Prophet's daughter Fatima al-Zahra [sa], Imam Zainul 'Abidin ('Ali bin al-Hussain) [as], Imam Muhammad ibn 'Ali al-Baqir [as] and Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq [as].

1924 AD Wahhabis entered Hijaz for the second time and carried out another merciless plunder and massacre. People in streets were killed. Houses were razed to the ground. Even Women and children too were not spared. Awn bin Hashim (Shairf of Makkah) writes: "Before me, a valley appeared to have been paved with corpses, dried blood staining everywhere all around. There was hardly a tree which didn't have one or two dead bodies near its roots'. On 8th Shawwal, Wednesday, in the year 1345 AH (April 21, 1925), mausoleums in Jannatul Al-Baqi (Madina) were demolished by King Ibn Saud. In the same year (1925), he also demolished the tombs of holy personages at Jannat al-Mualla

(Makkah) where the Holy Prophet (s)'s mother, wife, grandfather and other ancestors are buried.

A brief summary of the destruction of Islamic History and Heritage is as under:-

**1802-3** Mecca and Medina first attacked by the followers of ibn Wahab, destroying sacred places including the dome over the sacred Zamzam well, Jannat ul Moalla and Jannat ul Baqi.

**1818-1860** The Ottoman government took control of Hejaz renovated the mausoleums and reconstructed the sacred places of important Islamic sites.

**1924** Wahhabis enter Hijaz, killing the "non-believers" and "polytheists" and destroying the existing Islamic heritage.

**1925** The tombs and shrines in the Baqi and Jannat Al Mualla were destroyed, except for the shrine of the Prophet

### **Heritage**

The features belonging to the culture of a particular society, such as traditions, languages, or buildings, that were created in the past and still have historical importance are considered as Heritage. The demolition of Jannatul Baqi, Jannatul Moalla and other historical places of historical and religious importance is a crime committed by the Wahabis to the heritage. Because Heritage is our legacy from the past, what we live with today, and what we pass on to future generations. Our cultural and natural heritages are both irreplaceable sources of life and inspiration.

### **Heritage Sites in Saudi Arabia**

The Saudi Arabia government has about 16 official Heritage sites, but has no respect and regard for the Islamic History Heritage. Going through the list we may found that Ale Saud wants to preserve its own heritage of history, and destroy the Islamic History Heritage at all cost. Few examples are mentioned below.

## **1- Dir'iyah**

Diriyah [Dereyeh or Dariyya] is a town in Saudi Arabia located on the north-western outskirts of the Saudi capital, Riyadh. Diriyah was the original home of the Saudi royal family, and served as the capital of the Emirate of Diriyah under the first Saudi dynasty from 1744 to 1818. Today, the town is the seat of the Diriyah Governorate, which also includes the villages of Uyayna, Jubayla, and Al-Ammariyyah, among others, and is part of Ar Riyad Province. This is the birth place of Muhammad bin Abdul Wahhab and Ale Saud, and both were from the same family.

The interesting part of old Dir'aiyah is the Turaif Quarter, which is remarkably preserved. This was the headquarters of the Saudi ruling family. The wall of Dir'aiyah, interspersed with some defensive forts was built during the reign of Abdul Aziz Ibn Muhammad Ibn Saud to avert the threat of aspirants of Dir'aiyah. The total length of the wall is about 7 kilometers, where the wall at its maximum height is built with small stones as a base balancing the larger stones, further bound with layers of mud plaster.

## **2- Masmak Palace**

It is a strongly-protected castle with thick walls, located in the old quarter of the Riyadh City Centre. At the beginning of the twentieth century (January 1902), the beginning of 1319 Hijri, this castle was witness to a decisive battle when the Turkish rulers were defeated by the founder of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, King Abdul Aziz Al Saud. And then, after the conquest of Riyadh, subsequent strategic expansions lead to the creation of Saudi Arabia.

## **3- Al-Muraba Palace**

Another monument of historic value in the heart of the Riyadh city,

surrounded by vast and well manicured gardens is the Al Muraba Place. It was constructed by late King Abdulaziz following the settlement of matters in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, when the country was unified in the year 1351H (1932G). The palace was built in the rectangle shape – 300 meter as length and 400 meter as width with two levels as height. The roof is made of local building materials - mud and palm trees. Just across the palace is a well laid garden which forms the park of the National Museum, Riyadh's main museum of heritage and antiquities.

## **4- Shoubra Palace**

The palace was built in the year 1325 H (1907G), as the first historical palace in the beautiful city of Taif. It represents distinctive architectural elements and one of the important historic milestones in the city of Taif. It has been converted to a Heritage and Antiquities Museum in subsequent time.

## **5- Khuzam Palace**

The name Khuzam is given to a wide area in Al-Nuzlah Alyamaniah Quarter in Jeddah. There are many old palaces in this area and the name was given after the name of late King Abdulaziz Palace. The construction process of the palace began in the year 1347H (1928G), and completed by 1351H (1932G). The palace consisted of a two storey building and many associated buildings on the southern and western sides that form one adjacent unit and with fences of three meters high. The palace is built with solid limestone brought from the sea coast and part of the palace is converted as a museum of Antiquities and Heritage.

## **6- Old Eimarah Palace in Al-Ras**

It is located in the middle of Al-Ras Province and was constructed for over more than 100 years. It was made of mud and adobes with palm tree and Othel wood for roof. The late King Abdulaziz visited this palace and spent many days in the year 1348H

(1929G). One may see a few decorative samples in the sitting-rooms, Arabian Majlis, in the palace.

From the above one can see that the Saudi regime is interested to save and protect its own history and heritage and they are the enemy of the Islamic history and heritage.

### **What is the difference between Legend (myth), and History (real existence of people)?**

By destroying the Islamic History and Heritage the Wahabis are trying to convert Islam as a Mystery, which in fact is a History. Myth and History are close kins. Both tell how the things happened and tell some sort of story.

**Mythology** - Before defining the term "mythology" one needs to define the meaning of the word "myth". The word itself comes from the Greek "mythos" which originally meant "speech" or "discourse" but which later came to mean "fable" or "legend". The word "myth" is defined as a story of forgotten or vague origin, basically religious or supernatural in nature, which seeks to explain or rationalize one or more aspects of the world or a society.

### **History and its benefits-**

History is a narrative i.e. recording or presenting of facts as they are. History is the study of the past, particularly how it relates to humans. It is a dialogue between the present and the past, and study of the relationship between cause and effect in the overall development of human societies.

History tells us how things started; it helps us to learn how they may end up and where we are now. It sheds light on both future and present, connecting all three parts of time.

By learning history we may be able to Avoid Past Mistakes, make our present Different from the past, may Complete the unfinished works of Past, may realize the Past Dreams, may Learn Old Survival Strategies, may

reclaim Lost Advantages, establish our Bond with Ancestors, and may express our Gratitude to the past.

### **LEARN HISTORY:**

The Holy Quran also advice to learn History,

- Do not be like those who forgot Allah, so Allah made them forget themselves. [Surat Al-Hashr, 59:19]
- Was he not a drop of semen? Then a sticky mass, so Allah created and proportioned him [Surat Al-Qiyamah, 75:37-38], and
- Have you not seen how your Lord dealt with the People of the Elephant? [Surat Al-Fil 105:1]
- For the accustomed security of the Quraysh... Let them worship the Lord of this House, Who has fed them [saving them] from hunger and made them safe [saving them] from fear. [Surat Quraysh, 106:1-4]

Allah tells us about the drowning of Pharaoh and his men in the sea:

- “So this day We shall deliver your (dead) body (out from the sea) that you may be a sign to those who come after you! And verily, many among mankind are heedless of Our Ayat (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelation etc.)” (10:92)

The physical evidence of History provides authenticity of the historical figures places and personalities. By destroying the physical evidence of Islam, the Wahabis want to make Islam as a legend, a myth; like many philosophical religions of the world. How will we be able to show the evidence to our coming generations that Prophet Mohammad (ﷺ) ever existed in this world, if everything is destroyed related to him, his family and his companions?

Over the last few years, mosques and key sites dating from the time of Prophet Muhammad [SA] have been knocked down or destroyed, as have Ottoman-era mansions,

ancient wells and stone bridges. Over 98% of the Kingdom's historical and religious sites have been destroyed since 1985, estimates the 'Islamic Heritage Research Foundation in London'. "It's as if they wanted to wipe out history," says Ali Al-Ahmed, of the Institute for Gulf Affairs in Washington, D.C.

### **Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab**

He was born in 1703 and died on 22 June 1792. He was from Najd in central Arabia who founded the movement which is called Wahhabism. He is commonly referred as Shaikh. He rejected certain common Muslim practices which he regarded as amounting to either religious innovation (*bid'ah*) or polytheism (*shirk*).

### **Expulsion From Medina, Basra and Damascus**

Due to his personal interpretations of some issues regarding belief and his opposition to the '*ulama*' of Medina, he was expelled from the city. He then went to Iraq where he stayed in Basrah. In that city he got acquainted with a person named Shaykh Muhammad Majmu'i and adopted his ideas. Finally, the two believed in a certain creed. The other '*ulama*' of Basrah and the believers of the region had opposed him and ousted him from Basrah.

When he was driven out of Basrah, he proceeded to Damascus, which had a pleasant climate, but because of his unusual belief and difficulties in life he was unable to remain there. Since he could not return to Medina or Mecca, he went back to the Najd of his father, Shaykh 'Abd al-Wahhab, who was then still the '*alim*' of the region.

The Shaykh had a brother named Shaykh Sulayman ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab who was at loggerheads with him in terms of belief. His brother was the first person to write a book refuting his doctrines. His father also opposed him and sided with Shaykh Sulayman.

Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab was invited to settle in neighboring Diriyah by its ruler Muhammad bin Saud. After some time in Diriyah, Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab concluded a most successful agreement with a ruler. Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab and Muhammad bin Saud

agreed that, together, they would bring the Arabs of the peninsula back to the "true" principles of Islam as they saw it. Both agreed in 1744 that Ibn e Saud will perform jihad (Struggle to spread Islam) against the unbelievers. In return he will be the imam, leader of the Muslim community and Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab will be leader in religious matters.

Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab's pact with Muhammad bin Saud helped to establish the Emirate of Diriyah, the first Saudi state, and began a dynastic alliance and power-sharing arrangement between their families which continues to the present day in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The Al ash-Sheikh, Saudi Arabia's leading religious family, is the descendants of Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab, and has historically led the *ulama* in the Saudi state, dominating the state's clerical institutions.

### **MOHAMMED IBN ABD AL-WAHAB AND HIS MOVEMENT**

The destruction of places of worship in Saudi Arabia is systematic and an ongoing operation that is rooted within the ideology of religious and political authorities in the region. The survival of Abd al-Wahab's ideology has been gradually threatening Islamic culture and heritage in Saudi Arabia and also other parts of the world where it is implemented. The deliberate targeting of the Shrines of Prophet Jonas and Prophet Daniel in Mosul, Iraq in 2014 by the extremist group who call themselves 'Islamic State' is a fine example of ibn Wahab's teachings and cultural cleansing. Another well-known instance would be in February 2006, when one of Shi'ite Islam's holiest sites, Al-Askari Shrine in Samarra, Iraq, was bombed by terrorists, reducing it to rubble. Since, sectarian violence heightened across the country taking thousands of innocent lives away and weakening the trust between the religious sects in Iraq. Such intolerant teaching and behavior can be seen as the direct cause to the rising sectarianism and violence in the Middle Eastern region.

### **WAR Crime**

The Art. 8 of the Rome Statue of the International Criminal Court (2002) Article 8. Available at: [http://www.icc-cpi.int/nr/rdonlyres/ea9aeff7-5752-4f84-be94-0a655eb30e16/0/rome\\_statute\\_english.pdf](http://www.icc-cpi.int/nr/rdonlyres/ea9aeff7-5752-4f84-be94-0a655eb30e16/0/rome_statute_english.pdf) [Accessed on: 20th August 2015] clearly says that demolition of Historical Buildings belonging to Religion is a war crime. It says:-

*“intentionally directing attacks against buildings dedicated to religion, education, art, science or charitable purposes, historical monuments, hospitals and places where the sick and wounded are collected, provided they are not military objectives;”*

This had been also echoed in the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia that was established in 1993 which considers the destruction of “religious buildings” equivalent to “cultural genocide”.

In view of the above the Ale-Saud regime had committed a War Crime under the International Law. It is the responsibility of every prudent man without any consideration of religion, caste, creed, race, or country to oppose this act of Ale- Saud and raise his voice of protest against this action against the law, and demand for the reconstruction and restoration of all destroyed and demolished sites.

---

#### Bibliography:-

- 1- <https://scth.gov.sa/en/Heritage/Pages/HeritageSites.aspx>
- 

- 1- *Quran states: Thus did We make their (i.e. Ashaab al-Kahf) case known to the people, that they might know that the promise of Allah is true, and that*

*there can be no doubt about the Hour of Judgment. Behold, they dispute among themselves as to their affair. (Some) said, "Construct a building over them": Their Lord knows best about them: "THOSE WHO PREVAILED OVER THEIR AFFAIR SAID: LET US SURELY BUILD A MOSQUE OVER THEM" (Surah al-Kahf 18:21)*

- 2- *Whosoever nurses a grudge against a friend of mine (WALI) then "I (ALLAH) DECLARE WAR ON SUCH A PERSON" [Sahih Bukhari - Hadith ul Qudsi: Volume 8, Page No. 131]The Glorious Qur'an actually calls such places as "SHA'IR ALLAH (SIGNS OF ALLAH TO BE VENERATED)" and indeed the graves of Ambiya (Present right inside Masjid ul Harrah itself) and Awliya also come under Sha'ir Allah. Whosoever harms the graves is actually incurring upon himself a war from Allah as attested in Sahih Bukhari Hadith al-Qudsi i.e.*
- 3- *Allah Taa'la says in the Qur'an: "Verily Allah and his angels sent salutations to the Prophet ﷺ. O you who believe, send salutations and greetings to the Prophet ﷺ."*
- 4- *The Prophet ﷺ says in another Hadith reported by Hazrat Ammar bin Yaasir ؓ that Allah has appointed an angel to my grave, whosoever sends durood upon me, until the Day of Judgment his durood is presented to me along with his name and his father's name.*

